

State Department's response to Chairman Coburn's questions regarding travel and participation at Counterterrorism Conference in February 2005

March 1, 2006

Counterterrorism Conference Hosted in Riyadh

Question:

There was a Counterterrorism conference hosted in Riyadh in February. There were news reports that the pres dispatched Fran Townsend, and people from State and Treasury. This conference took place February 5-8, 2005. Would post or the bureau know who attended with Fran Townsend? Or If State even attended? If so, why was this conference not represented in the detail that was submitted?

Answer:

Seven State Department personnel attended the Counterterrorism conference in Riyadh last February, five of which were assigned to the Embassy. The hotel and meal cost for the two Department Officials who traveled to Riyadh were paid by the Saudi Government and travel was provided by the U.S. Military. Attendance at this conference was not reported in the previously provided request for data because no bureau related funding was obligated for this event.

State policy on foreign official travel

Question:

Does State pay for the hotels of foreign officials traveling to America?

Answer :

We have statutory authority to pay for foreign official travel in a variety of contexts. For example, under section 50 of the Basic Authorities Act we are authorized to pay for travel expenses of foreign participants in connection with an international conference or meeting hosted by the USG in the US.

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State policy on invitational travel

Question:

Is it State policy to allow foreign governments to pay for our officials' room and board?

Answer:

The Department of State has statutory authority to accept unsolicited, in-kind donations from foreign governments to defray travel expenses incurred by U.S. government employees in connection with invitational travel. These donations are accepted in accordance with applicable statutes and Department and government-wide regulations.

5 USC 7342(C) (Foreign Gifts and Decorations Act)
2 FAM 962.1-8 (Gifts of Invitational Travel)
22 CFR 3.4 (Restriction on acceptance of gifts and decorations)
31 U.S.C. 1353 (Acceptance of travel and related expenses from non-Federal sources)
41 CFR Chapter 304 (Payment of Travel Expenses From a Non-Federal Source)
14 FAM 533.9 (Non-federally Financed Invitational Travel)